

Washington, DC -- Congressman Vern Buchanan (FL-13) will introduce legislation this week to reauthorize SCORE (Service Corps of Retired Executives), the Small Business Administration's (SBA) small business counseling program. The SCORE program provides entrepreneurs with the small business advice of working and retired executive volunteers.

"For years, SCORE has been providing entrepreneurs with free, confidential, and valuable small business advice," said Buchanan. "With double digit unemployment rates, more people will be trying to start their own business. Their success is vital to our economic recovery. This bill will ensure that qualified volunteers are available to provide one-on-one advice and counsel to small businesses."

The "Retired Executives Building Better Businesses Act of 2009" would require SCORE administrators to actively recruit and maintain volunteer mentors and track their success. Counselors would be required to have at least ten years of similar experience. Currently, SCORE has 389 chapters in locations throughout the United States with 10,500 volunteers nationwide.

The chairwoman of the Manasota SCORE Chapter, Jeannette Watling-Mills, will be in Washington, DC on Thursday to testify in support of Buchanan's bill before the Small Business Subcommittee on Rural Development, Entrepreneurship and Trade. Watling-Mills is currently owner of Bob's Window Cleaning, a commercial window cleaning company servicing Sarasota and Manatee counties. She is one of about 50 volunteer consultants who assist entrepreneurs in Manatee and Sarasota Counties by mentoring on a wide range of business issues. The hearing will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, April 2, 2009 in room 2360 of the Rayburn House Office Building.